

## NOTES AND NEWS.

PHILIP LUTLEY SCLATER, D. Sc., F. R. S., one of the original Honorary Fellows of the American Ornithologists' Union, died on June 27, 1913, at the age of eighty-three years. Dr. Sclater was known throughout the scientific world as secretary of the Zoological Society of London, a post which he filled from 1859 to 1902; and as a founder of the British Ornithologists' Union, and editor of its journal 'The Ibis' from 1866 to 1912 with the exception of a period of 12 years. He was also chairman of the British Ornithologists' Club since its organization. His services to ornithology throughout his long and active life can scarcely be overestimated, especially in connection with neotropical bird life of which he made a specialty, and upon which he published a long series of papers culminating with the volumes of the British Museum Catalogue of Birds, dealing with the Tanagridæ, Icteridæ, Tyrannidæ, Dendrocolaptidæ, Formicariidæ and other characteristic neotropical families. Dr. Sclater's loss will be felt by ornithologists the world over, especially by the many who were fortunate enough either through personal contact or through correspondence to count him as a friend.

At the request of the president of the American Ornithologists' Union, Dr. Daniel Giraud Elliot will deliver a memorial address on Dr. Sclater at the annual meeting of the Union in November, which will be published in full in the January number of 'The Auk.'

THE American Museum's zoological explorations in South America, which, during the past two years, have produced such interesting results in the northern parts of that continent, now promise to be even more effectively prosecuted in southern South America, under the leadership of Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, who in December plans to enter Southern Brazil.

Mr. George K. Cherrie and Mr. Leo E. Miller, both tried members of former Museum expeditions, will accompany Colonel Roosevelt as field assistants.

In Ecuador, Mr. Richardson has had a successful season and a shipment of 1400 birds and mammals has just been received from him. These specimens were collected in part on the coast from the northern extension of the arid coastal zone of Peru, and give definite information of where this arid strip merges into the humid coastal region of northeastern Ecuador and western Colombia.

Mr. Richardson also collected in the luxuriant forests of the Subtropical Zone at an altitude of 6000 feet, in the Temperate Zone about Quito and the base of Pinchincha, and in the Paramo or Alpine Zone of Pinchincha and Chimborazo, working on the latter mountain up to an altitude of

16,000 feet. Here Mr. Richardson secured not only specimens but accessories for a Habitat Group designed to represent the bird-life of the upper life-zone of this extinct volcano.

From Peru, the Museum's available study material has received an exceptionally important addition in the collections made by R. H. Beck for Mr. F. F. Brewster and Dr. L. C. Sanford. A large shipment lately received from Mr. Beck is particularly rich in little-known marine forms collected well off the coast of Peru, and in a beautifully prepared series of water-fowl from Lake Junin, situated at an altitude of 13,000 feet in the Peruvian Andes, which includes the Andean Flamingo and many other species not heretofore represented in the Museum.

THE thirty-first stated meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union will be held at the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, November 11-13, 1913, with a business meeting of the Fellows on the evening of the 10th. The annual subscription dinner will be held at the Hotel Endicott, close to the museum, which will also be the headquarters for visiting members.

These annual gatherings bring together upwards of one hundred bird students from various parts of the country. The attractions offered by the sessions of the meeting, and by the institution at which they are held, and above all the stimulus of personal contact with other ornithologists, tend to bring back those who have once been fortunate enough to be present at one of these gatherings. There are however a great many members and associates of the Union who have never attended a meeting and upon these especially we would urge the importance of at once making plans to be present in New York on November 11. One of the greatest privileges of membership is the opportunity of attending these annual meetings and a large attendance creates a wider and deeper interest in ornithology and strengthens the organization of the A. O. U. which has done so much for bird study in America.

WE learn from 'The Ibis' of the safe return of Mr. A. F. R. Wollaston's New Guinea Expedition. The party consisted of Mr. Wollaston, Mr. C. B. Kloss, five Dyak collectors, seventy-four Dyak carriers and an escort of 130 men provided by the Dutch Government. They succeeded in reaching the snow line on Mt. Carstensz about the end of February, and sailed for home April 3.

The collections include 1300 skins of birds and some of the novelties have already been described by Mr. Ogilvie-Grant. The party found animal life very scarce above 6,000 ft. Some Pipit-like birds occurred about 9000 ft. and a Dove and a Thrush between 13000 and 14000 ft.

JUST one hundred years ago there occurred an event the effect of which, on the development of American ornithology, it is impossible to estimate. On August 23, 1813, there died in Philadelphia, Alexander Wilson, aged

forty-seven years and forty-eight days. At the time of his death he was engaged in preparing for publication the eighth volume of his 'American Ornithology.' This confining work during the heat of midsummer seems to have been too much for a constitution never robust, and he was unable to withstand an attack of sickness which might not under other circumstances have proved serious.

Wilson's premature death removed him from the scientific world, when he was known to but very few outside of his own city. He did not live to hear the great praise that his work received in the scientific centers of England and France, and apparently had reaped no financial profits from its publication.

One cannot but speculate upon what the effect would have been upon later ornithologists had Wilson been spared to round out the period of life normally allotted to man. We know that he had a work on American Mammals in mind and also a popular manual or handbook on American birds. What influence would the existence of such works have had upon the similar publications of Audubon and Nuttall? Indeed the presence in America of an ornithologist of the reputation that Wilson must surely have attained, would certainly have had a tremendous influence upon the whole career of Audubon, who as it was had the field practically to himself.

In the March and June numbers of 'Bird Notes and News' are some interesting articles on the prevention of bird mortality at light houses. The idea of saving the birds which, attracted by the light, are supposed to dash themselves against the masonry or glass of the lighthouses, originated with the distinguished Dutch naturalist, Prof. Jac. P. Thijssse. He advanced the theory that the majority of the migrants fascinated by the glare, or so bewildered by it that they lose their sense of direction, fly aimlessly round and round seeking a resting place, until they become exhausted, fall, and perish.

For three years past he has had installed at the Terschelling Lighthouse on the Frisian Islands, ladder like perches of wood or iron covered with cloth, attached to the roof and platform. On nights when conditions are favorable for attracting migrants to the light, the perches become crowded with resting birds "to the number of ten thousand" and when dawn approaches the whole company resume their flight. The mortality has been so reduced that at present it does not exceed a hundred birds during the whole migration period.

Similar experiments are now in progress at St. Catharine's Lighthouse on the English coast, being conducted by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds with the hearty support of the Lighthouse Board. It has already been demonstrated both here and at Terschelling that the racks or perches must be placed actually in the glare of the light, as the birds will not alight in the dark area above or below.

It is encouraging to find what promises to be such a simple solution of this problem.

MESSRS. WITHERBY & Co., 326 High Holborn, London, announce the publication, by subscription, of a work entitled *The Gannet: a Bird with a History* by J. H. Gurney, F. Z. S., illustrated with colored plates, maps and drawings; 600 octavo pages. Price to subscribers before October 30, 25 shillings.

DULTZ & Co., 6 Landwehrstrasse, München, announce a reprint of the ornithological articles contributed by R. P. Lesson to the "Echo du Monde Savant." This is one of the rarest of publications and the importance of Lesson's contributions make reference to it imperative. The reprint will be under the editorship of Dr. A. Menegaux.